



Planning for the 115th Congress & the Trump Administration

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While the coming 115th Congress and Trump Administration seem to be anything but predictable, there are several known events that will help drive the timing of national, and some regional, policy debates. They should be factored into your strategic planning, particularly for the first quarter of 2017.

January 3 – First Day of 115th Congress. Official election of Congressional leaders who have already been chosen by their partisan caucuses. Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) were reelected in the House and Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) was reelected Senate Majority Leader and Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) was elected Senate Minority Leader.

February 6 – President Trump’s budget due to be sent to Congress – likely to include plan for new infrastructure spending, among other things. Deadline likely to be missed, as sometimes happens with a new President. (Current budget law requires the President to submit the budget between the first Monday in January and the first Monday in February. However, this deadline has been missed before)

March 16 – Current Debt Limit Expires. Congress must lift debt ceiling to avert shut-down of Federal government and some state level programs dependent upon it.

April 15 – In addition to being tax day, the Congressional Budget Resolution must be passed. It’s a framework and does not involve actual appropriation of funding; but it sets Congressional priorities and this one will likely include a plan for tax reform (does not involve Presidential approval).

April 28 – Expiration of ‘Continuing Resolution’ that is currently funding government operations. New spending legislation required to fund the Federal government through the end of Fiscal Year 2017 and avert a government shutdown.

April 30 –Trump’s 100th Day in office.

Note: The confirmation process for Administration appointees requiring Senate confirmation will consume the Senate agenda for the first part of the year. Some appointees will be vacating congressional seats. While this will not change the overall partisan control of Congress, it will set off some special elections, which are of note due to the committee assignments vacated by the appointees confirmed. Two of them will be vacating key positions on the powerful House Committee on Ways & Means. As of now, the likely changes include:

AL: Sen. Jeff Sessions (R) will resign his seat if confirmed as Attorney General. Gov. Robert Bentley (R) can appoint a replacement, and then schedule a special election. He sits on the committees on Armed Services, Budget, Environment & Public Works and Judiciary.

CA: Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-34) has already resigned his congressional seat to become California’s Attorney General. But Governor Jerry Brown (D) has yet to set a date for the election. A number of Democrats have declared their candidacies for this seat and it’s likely that two will participate in a run-off for the downtown LA seat. He sits on the Committee on Ways & Means, where he serves as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Social Security.

GA: Rep. Tom Price (R-6) will resign his seat if confirmed as Secretary of Health and Human Services. There will be a ‘jungle primary’ that requires a simple majority to win. If none achieve a majority, the top two candidates will vie for the seat in a run-off. It is not clear at this time whether either political party has an advantage in this district. He currently serves as the Chair of the Committee on the Budget and on the Ways & Means Subcommittee on Health.

KS: Rep. Pompeo (R-4) will resign his seat if confirmed as CIA director. Gov. Sam Brownback (R) will have five days to call an election that will occur within 45 and 60 days, and the major political parties will select their candidates for that race by holding conventions. He will vacate seats on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Committee on Energy & Commerce.

MT: Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-At Large) will resign his seat if confirmed as Interior Secretary. He will leave open seats on the Armed Services and Natural Resources Committees.

SC: Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-5) will resign his seat when appointed to head the Office of Management and Budget. Mulvaney, a fiscal hawk elected along with other ‘Tea Party’ Republicans in 2010, was a co-founder of the House Freedom Caucus. When Mulvaney is confirmed, the acting governor (Gov. Haley has been nominated to be UN Ambassador and could be appointed earlier) will call a special election that could take a few months to play out. The special election will consist of two primaries for the major political parties and then the general election between those two nominees. Runoff elections may be required if no candidate earns an absolute majority of votes in the primary. Mulvaney will vacate seats on the House Financial Services Committee and the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Another date of note later in 2017 is September 30:

– End of Fiscal Year 2017. New spending law required for the government to operate into Fiscal Year 2018 or

a continuing resolution needs to be passed to keep the government from shutting down. Also, -CHIP Funding Expires (Children's Health Insurance Program), which is important to many in the different aspects of the healthcare industry.

Nossaman Policy Advisors and Attorneys are a bipartisan team with collective experience in both chambers of the U.S. Congress and various Executive branch departments and agencies. We are well positioned to help you navigate all aspects of public policy challenges that will be presented by the 115th Congress and the Trump Administration.